

AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Claims 1-22 (canceled).

Claim 23 (currently amended) A protective bib, comprising:

an expandable collar comprised of a gatherable material having an inner border and an outer border, said inner border forming a neck opening for encircling the neck of a human wearer, said outer border communicating with a flexible hoop, said collar being positioned inside of said flexible hoop such that said collar spans inward of said hoop toward said inner border to terminate at said neck opening, said hoop including a memory quality for allowing the expansion and contraction of said hoop and collar, and wherein upon being positioned upon a wearer's neck in a contracted state, said hoop is separated a distance from the wearer's neck by said collar now lying in a gathered fashion about the neck of the wearer, said inner border of said collar being tensioned snugly about the wearer's neck by said hoop, said hoop further comprising a preformed curved front section along said hoop's horizontal axis and a preformed side section along said hoop's vertical axis, said side section curving rearward of said front section, said front and side sections causing said hoop to lie fittingly about a wearer's shoulders and chest.

~~The protective bib as recited in claim 22, wherein said hoop further comprises a preformed curved front section along said hoop's horizontal axis and a preformed side section curving rearward of said front section along said hoop's vertical axis,~~

~~said curved front and side sections causing said hoop to lie fittingly about a
wearer's shoulders and chest.~~

Claim 24 (currently amended) A protective bib, comprising:

an expandable collar comprised of a gatherable material having an inner border
and an outer border, said inner border forming a neck opening for encircling the
neck of a human wearer, said outer border communicating with a flexible hoop,
said hoop terminating at two ends, said collar being positioned inside of said
flexible hoop such that said collar spans inward of said hoop toward said inner
border to terminate at said neck opening, said hoop including a memory quality
for allowing the expansion and contraction of said hoop and collar, and wherein
upon being positioned upon a wearer's neck in a contracted state, said hoop is
separated a distance from the wearer's neck by said collar now lying in a gathered
fashion about the neck of the wearer, said inner border of said collar being
tensioned snugly about the wearer's neck by said hoop, said bib further
comprising opposing arms, said opposing arms being exterior to said ends of said
hoop, said opposing arms providing a grasping surface for spreading said hoop
ends and arms apart. ~~The protective bib as recited in claim 22, further comprising
opposing arms exterior to said ends of said hoop, said opposing arms providing a
grasping surface for spreading said hoop ends and arms apart.~~

Claims 25-28 (canceled)

Claim 29 (original) A protective bib, comprising:

an expandable collar comprised of a gatherable material spanning between an outer border and an inner border of said collar, said collar further being positioned within an interior area of a flexible hoop, said hoop being formed to lie fittingly upon the shoulders and chest of a human wearer, said flexible hoop communicating with and substantially encircling said collar, said hoop including a memory quality for allowing the expansion and contraction of said collar about the neck of a wearer; and a body portion extending below said hoop and collar.

Claim 30 (original) The protective bib as recited in claim 29, wherein said formably fitted flexible hoop further comprises a preformed curved front section along said hoop's horizontal axis and a preformed side section curving rearward of said front section along said hoop's vertical axis, said curved front and side sections causing said hoop to lie fittingly upon a wearer's shoulders and chest.

Claim 31 (currently amended) The protective bib as recited in claim 29, wherein said hoop terminates at two ends, said ends communicating with a pair of opposing arms located exterior to said ends, said opposing arms providing a grasping surface for spreading said hoop ends and arms apart. ~~further comprising opposing arms exterior to said ends of said hoop, said opposing arms providing a grasping surface for spreading said hoop ends and arms apart.~~

Claim 32 (original) The protective bib as recited in claim 29, wherein said hoop further comprises overlapping ends in its contracted state to bring said collar in snug contact with a wearer's neck.

Claim 33 (currently amended) The protective bib as recited in claim 29, wherein said collar further comprises [an] a neck opening, said neck opening having an elastic material coupled along said neck opening[,] creating an expandable region for elastically encircling the neck of a wearer.

Claim 34 (original) The protective bib of claim 29, wherein said gatherable collar material is further comprised of absorbent material.

Claim 35 (original) The protective bib of claim 29, wherein said gatherable collar material is further comprised of non-absorbent material.

Claim 36 (canceled) A protective bib, comprising:

a hoop of memory material capable of expanding and contracting;
a collar for surrounding the neck of a wearer which communicates with said hoop;
said collar including an area spanning inward of said hoop and terminating at an interior neck opening;
said hoop placing encircling tension upon said collar and bringing said neck opening into a snugly contacting relation with the neck of a wearer.